

Turkey News Update



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Sent Items

I thought you might be interested in the latest developments regarding the Republic of Turkey.

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US & Turkey Work Together in Syria

- Turkish FM Çavuşoğlu and US Secretary of State Pompeo, met on June 4th where they endorsed the Turkish-US Working Group on Syria's recommendation for a roadmap on cooperation and stability in Syria's Manbij. They discussed bilateral relations, regional issues, their commitment to the safety and security of Syria, as well as their mutual commitment and continued cooperation in the fight against terrorism.
- US Secretary of Interior Zinke reiterated the importance of US-Turkey relations, calling Turkey a strategic ally and stating that the bilateral relationship between the two is important not only for the two nations, but for the region and the world. He stated, "Turkey has been a longstanding ally", and that the two will continue to focus on transparency, communication, and a mutual understanding.

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President Recep Tayyip Erdogan Wins Re-Election Battle

- Turkey's President Erdogan received 53% of the vote with close to 90% turnout in the Turkish elections held on

Sunday June 24th.

- US President Trump called President Erdogan on Monday to congratulate him over his victory in the presidential vote. The two leaders confirmed their commitment to bilateral cooperation on defense and military affairs during the phone call.

<http://turkey.theglobepost.com/trump-erdogan-congratulation-election-victory/>

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/turkey-elections-recep-tayyip-erdogan-re-elected-president/ar-AAz638k>

Turkey Tops Tourism Charts

- In the first four months of 2018, nearly 8 million foreigners visited Turkey, an increase of 32.55% year-on-year, with nearly 3.9 million visiting Istanbul.
- The first quarter of 2018 showed Turkish tourism income increase 31.3% year-on-year, up to \$4.43 billion.
- Turkey's foreign ministry aims to attract 50 million tourists by 2023, which would generate revenue of about \$50 billion.
- Demand for Turkey vacations is up over 25% among international tourists.
- In the first four months of 2018, over 6 million people visited museums and archaeological sites in Turkey.
- Travel agencies have seen summer bookings in Turkey increase 80%, with sales revenues doubling since last year.
- The UK's Ambassador to Turkey expects almost 3 million British tourists to visit Turkey in 2018, due to its attractive southern coast and its commitment to tourist safety.
- In the first four months of 2018, more than 60.1 million people traveled through Turkey's airports, a 19.5% increase year-on-year.
- Hotel occupancy in Turkey hit a record high with a 72.6% occupancy rate in April. The rates hit 79.5% in Istanbul hotels, a 23.6% increase from April 2017. Turkey also reached the highest monthly growth rate for hotel occupancy among all European destinations.
- Turkey has committed to become a global leader in health care tourism, now ranked fourth in the global list for number of patients served, and third in terms of the revenue generated. Turkey hosted nearly 756,000 health tourists in 2017, generating \$7.2 billion, which can be attributed to new regulations, incentives, and large investments in healthcare infrastructure and technology, especially in state-of-the-art oncology equipment.
- Turkey's low investment and operational costs prime the country for major tourism investments. State initiatives, such as: extending 49-year leases for tourism facilities, enabling the practice of timeshare property ownership, tax incentives, and increased assisted living facilities have boosted international investments in Turkey's tourism sector.
- Tourists are seeking out Turkey as a vacation destination for its amazing food, its vibrant history allowing tourists to explore museums, ruins and UNESCO world heritage sites, and its beautiful coastline.

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Turkey's Economy Expected to Recover

- Since Turkey's market crash in May, the Lira has fallen quite a bit from where it stood earlier this year. However, following Turkey's June 24 elections, the country is expected to increase its economic performance.
- Turkey has announced short and long term economic measures to reduce interest rate and exchange rate pressures, and combat inflation.
- Turkey is establishing model custom and trade centers to boost the country's share in the global logistic market, which will add considerable value to Turkey's economy by using innovative approaches for businesses in planning,

financing, and management.

- Turkey's exports rose to \$161.1 billion in the last year, a 10.7% increase. In the first four months of 2018, Turkey's exports rose by 10.4% to \$54.7 billion, with its top export market being Germany, followed by the UK and Italy.
- The number of newly established companies jumped to 8,456 in April, a 33% increase compared to April 2017, with only 578 companies going out of business, down 21% from April 2017. In the first four months of 2018, 32,554 new companies opened in Turkey—an annual increase of almost 35%.
- The EBRD and Turkey's Credit Guarantee Fund came together to expand financing for female led small businesses, adding €300 million in new financing to encourage women to join the workforce.
- In the first four months of 2018, The Turkish patent and trademark office received 42,345 trademark applications. In April alone, it received 13,976 trademark applications, an 8.1% increase year-on-year, outpacing all other European countries.
- More than 6,500 companies founded or co-founded by Syrians have been registered in Turkey since the war began in 2011. This massive influx has stimulated growth in the Turkish economy and attracted foreign investment by providing cheap labor and boosting consumption.

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Turkey Looks to Strengthen Vital Bilateral Partnerships in Africa & Asia

- Turkey celebrated the 55th anniversary of Africa Day, now having 41 embassies throughout Africa with the ultimate goal of being represented in every African country.
- Since beginning his term as Prime Minister, President Erdogan has made official visits to 26 African countries, with trade between Turkey and Africa now exceeding \$20 billion, a fivefold increase since 2003.
- Turkish President Erdogan has increased humanitarian and development partnerships with African countries, with TIKA spending \$1.43 billion on sustainable development projects in Africa between 2004-2016.
- Turkish President Erdogan met with Ethiopian President Teshome where they committed to holding further consultations on strengthening existing economic and diplomatic relations.
- Turkish President Erdogan recently visited Uzbekistan, where the two countries agreed on 25 political, economic, and cultural agreements focused on energy, economy, and trade. President Erdogan praised the 30% increase, to \$1.5 billion in bilateral trade between the two countries in 2017, and made a goal to reach \$5 billion.
- Turkey and Uzbekistan agreed on 50 investment projects worth over \$3 billion, including: building energy facilities, infrastructure developments, developing religious tourism, archival projects, training for security forces, protection for workers, initiatives to decrease crime, and fight against terrorism.
- Turkish President Erdogan met with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, where the two agreed to boost relations in numerous areas of economic activity like trade, energy, healthcare, transport, infrastructure, and defense. The two also signed four agreements on cooperation in higher education, telecommunications and satellite technology, industry and energy, and health and medical science.
- Bilateral trade between South Korea and Turkey rose over 17% between 2012 and 2017, reaching \$6.12 billion.

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Erdogan's Commitment to Turkish Rights & Higher Standard of Living

- Erdogan hailed all Turkish workers and laborers in his May Day speech where he emphasized their important role in Turkey's growth and development. He stressed the importance of worker's rights and benefits, fair pay, and touched on government initiatives to decrease unemployment.
- A total of 904 women from 7 political parties are running to become parliamentarians in the June 24 elections, accounting for 21.5% of candidates, a record in Turkey's history. Currently, there are 82 women parliamentarians, two of which are ministers.
- Turkey has seen an 82% decline in number of underage mothers in Turkey due to increased education and access to healthcare.

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Turkey Strengthens Diplomatic & Economic Ties with UK & Europe

- Post-Brexit Britain seeks to boost trade and investment with Turkey to compensate for the expected loss of trade with its EU partners.
- In the last two years, the UK has doubled its export finance program to Turkey to £3.5 billion. The UK is Turkey's second largest export market.
- In the last 15 years, the UK has invested over \$15 billion in Turkey, and the two countries have agreed to a goal of increasing their trade volume to \$20 billion.
- Turkish President Erdogan met with Queen Elizabeth II and British Prime Minister Theresa May, where they discussed deepening economic ties between the two countries through a post-Brexit bilateral free trade agreement. The UK's direct investments to Turkey has recently reached \$917 million.
- The UK company Global Growth Institute has worked with the Turkish government to launch their World Class Manager program to help train young Turkish leaders and managers at the British Consulate in Istanbul. With nearly 50% of Turkey's population under the age of 30, this program will allow young Turks to establish business skills necessary to be successful in the international workforce.
- Turkey has joined the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) as the 17th member state. ICMPD holds UN observer status and aims to promote innovative migration policies to enhance international cooperation on refugee issues. As the largest refugee hosting country with over 3.5 million Syrians, ICMPD membership will allow Turkey to provide concrete policy recommendations on migration issues.
- The EU's deputy director general for neighborhood policy and enlargement negotiations praised Turkey for the country's work in educating over 600,000 Syrian children.
- The Head of the EU Delegation to Ankara said that Turkey and the EU remain close. To date, the EU has transferred two-thirds of the first phase of the promised funds to support Syrian refugees in Turkey, a total investment of €6 billion.
- Hungarian Ambassador to Turkey Kiss applauded Turkey's humanitarian assistance to nearly 3.5 million Syrian refugees. He noted, "Turkey is helping millions of people who were displaced by war, and Turkey is doing this despite the many threats it faces." He continued, "Turkey is doing a lot for the security of Europe and Hungary."
- Turkish President Erdogan met with the Chairman of Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency Izetbegovic, where the two discussed economic and infrastructure cooperation. They are also working on a free trade agreement, hoping to increase trade to \$1 billion.

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Turkey Prioritizes Humanitarian Aide

- Matthew Saltmarsh, Senior External Relations Officer at the UN High Commission for Refugees, praised Turkey's care and integration of the more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees living within its borders.
- Turkey's AFAD and the Turkish Red Crescent have helped over 300,000 civilians in Afrin, Syria, by distributing 72,925 food packages (enough food to feed a family for a month), 920,794 hot meals, 46,586 core relief items, 21,118 non-food items, and providing water trucking services, as well as, 76,733 bottles of water.
- Turkey recently opened a migration health center to serve over 70,000 Syrians in Turkey, as part of an initiative to incorporate Syrian doctors and nurses into the Turkish healthcare system, and to ensure care for Syrian refugees.
- The school enrollment rate for Syrian refugee children in Turkey has reached 63%. The EU has also agreed to provide €160 million to build 215 schools for Syrian children.
- TIKA has distributed nearly 40 tons of food to 1,000 flood victims' families in Somalia.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-praised-for-care-given-to-syrian-refugees-131600>

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<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/education/63-pct-syrian-children-in-turkey-attend-school/1154727>

Turkey Focuses on Infrastructure Investment

- Turkey will invest \$46.4 billion to transform its railways to be electronically operated to raise productivity to the maximum level by 2023.
- In the last 15 years, Turkey has invested \$25 billion on its railways and high-speed trains.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-to-invest-over-46-bln-on-railways-in-five-years-minister-131516>

Turkey's Strong Commitment to Renewable Energy

- Turkey will be able to cover over 20% of its power with wind and solar energy by 2026, reaching 40 GW of installed capacity, without any additional investment for the country's power transmission system.

<https://www.pv-magazine.com/2018/05/09/turkeys-solar-could-pass-20-gw-by-2026/>

All the best,

The Honorable Robert Wexler